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EDUCATION, SCIENCE, TRANSFER OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TECHNOLOGIES, COOPERATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

Draft decision submitted by the Chairman

Science for sustainable development

1. The Commission took note of the report of the Secretary-General on science for sustainable development (E/CN.17/1995/16), including the initiatives taken by national Governments, the United Nations system, other international organizations, major groups and the scientific and technological community to implement science-related policies and programmes.

2. The Commission welcomed the proposals for action contained in section III, which identified areas for priority actions that should be taken by countries and regional and international organizations, with a view to further enhancing the contribution of science to sustainable development, in particular in developing countries.

3. The Commission noted recent intergovernmental processes relevant to science for sustainable development, such as the establishment of the Commission on Science and Technology for the South (COMSATS), with its aim of creating 20 centres of excellence in the South as the frontier areas of science related to sustainable development and the related Network of International Centres of Excellence in the South.

4. The Commission also noted the meetings of the Presidential Forum on the Management of Science and Technology for Development in Africa which, inter alia, led to the inauguration of the African Foundation for Research and Development (AFRAND).

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5. The Commission highlighted the useful cooperation and collaboration with the Commission on Science and Technology for Development through its Panel on Science and Technology for Integrated Land Management, which provided an important input into the discussions of the Ad Hoc Inter-sessional Working Group on Sectoral Issues.

6. The Commission stressed the importance of North-South and South-South cooperation and partnerships as mechanisms to support initiatives in capacity-building for science at the country level.

7. The Commission stressed the interdisciplinary nature of science and the need for related initiatives and research to reflect the linkages between the economic, social and natural aspects of science.

8. The Commission recognized the importance of indigenous people's knowledge and that indigenous sciences, traditions and communities should be consulted to help solve sustainable development problems.

9. The Commission:

(a) Invites the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, to fully explore the possibilities of intensified scientific cooperation as provided for in the Conventions;

(b) Urges countries and international organizations to accord high priority to measures aimed at capacity-building and sharing of know-how in science, with particular emphasis on the needs of developing countries. In this regard, Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant intergovernmental organizations should:

(i) Share reliable and sector/country-specific information concerning scientific capacities and know-how and its impact on achieving sustainable development objectives in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, and make this information available to the Commission, through, inter alia, well-documented case-studies;

(ii) Specify and implement activities, including through joint initiatives, cooperation and partnership arrangements, which are targeted towards enhancing the scientific capacities and capabilities of developing countries in the following priority areas: promoting general scientific education and sharing of know-how and training, particularly with regard to women; enhancing the status of science; enhancing the capabilities of decision makers to use existing scientific information in the development of sustainable development policies; improving the integration of science in national development policies and plans; promoting interdisciplinary approaches and use of new technologies; and increasing training in specialized scientific areas;

(iii) Take appropriate measures to ensure the flow of new and additional financial resources to developing countries;

OR

(iii) Take appropriate measures to encourage the flow of adequate financial and other resources from all available sources, in particular to developing countries, to support these efforts;

(c) Encourages Governments to enhance, with the support of intergovernmental and other relevant international organizations, international scientific cooperation, including North-South and South-South cooperation, taking into account current and planned efforts, for example, the initiatives of COMSATS and the Presidential Forum on the Management of Science and Technology for Development in Africa. In this regard, there is a need for:

(i) The networking of national and international centres of excellence which would build upon existing national and regional research, education and development institutions, organizations and programmes;

(ii) The enhanced participation of developing countries in international research programmes on global environmental issues, recognizing that in many scientific fields related to sustainable development, generation of new knowledge requires enhanced international scientific cooperation. Joint efforts could relate to:

a. Making full use and exploring the development of Global Environment Observing Systems;

b. Reinforcing and, where necessary, expanding existing international scientific programmes to ensure coordination and high-quality scientific results;

c. Identifying emerging issues for international scientific cooperation and addressing appropriate response strategies;

(d) Encourages initiatives at the country level to improve communication between science, industry, policy makers and major groups and to enhance the application of science. In this regard, Governments, the scientific and technological community, including universities, and the industrial sector should enhance cooperative efforts to ensure that the most recent and comprehensive scientific information is collected, synthesized and made available to interested groups. In addition, these groups should also cooperate to identify priority research needs in support of sustainable development;

(e) Invites the donor community to consider targeted financial support for the implementation of specific activities related to scientific capacity-building in the identified priority areas. In this regard, adequate funding is needed, inter alia, for:

(i) Promoting basic scientific education, enhancing interdisciplinarity between natural and social sciences, enhancing research on and

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development of new technologies and increasing training in specialized scientific areas, according to national priorities. Such efforts should also be part of relevant United Nations agency programmes and a goal of domestic education programmes in all countries;

(ii) Networking of national and international centres of excellence;

(iii) Implementing problem-oriented interdisciplinary research and demonstration projects, in particular in developing countries, in support of the development of sector-specific sustainable resource management policies.